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TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER PINS KCRS IZ

SUBJECT: PRT SALAH AD DIN: ANXIETIES BUILD AMID QUESTIONS AS DEBAATH APPLICATION LOOMS

REF: BAGHDAD 636

Classified By: PRT Salah ad Din Team Leader Rick Bell
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is a PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din reporting cable.

Summary

¶2. (C) With anxieties building as the April 14 application deadline set in the Justice and Accountability Law approaches, Salah Ad Din (SaD) provincial officials have begun to collect data on former Firqa and Shuba level Baathists. However, many former Baath Party members who could benefit from the law have expressed concern that identifying themselves on applications is potentially a form of entrapment that will lead to their exclusion from public life. SaD officials complain that the GoI is failing to provide guidance but feel compelled to move the process forward locally. End Summary.

¶3. (C) With the April 14 deadline nearing for former Firqa and Shuba level employees to apply for reinstatement to their positions or to receive a pension, and absent guidance from Baghdad, Provincial officials, including Deputy Governor Abdullah Jabara (who is Firqa-level himself) have begun to gather names and related information in order to prepare for the April 14 deadline. The Province has developed application forms for those seeking reinstatement, continued service, or pensions as envisioned in the Accountability and Justice Law. While that law, which came into force on February 14, directed the Council of Representatives (CoR) to name a seven-member committee to promulgate rules to meet the law's requirements, with less than one month to go before applications are due, the CoR has not even named the panel. In previous discussions with the National De-Baathification Commission (reftel), Provincial leaders were told that no action in developing implementing regulations would be taken prior to the naming of the seven-member committee.

Province Tries to Prepare

¶4. (C) On March 19, Jabara expressed to us his deep concern that the GoI has not yet provided any guidance on the process. He gave PRTPolOff forms that the Province has developed for those who stand to benefit from the law. These forms request basic information about the applicant. The Province hopes to gather this information before the April 14 application deadline so provincial officials will have sufficient time to submit these applications in case the deadline is not extended. Jabara also noted that he had received calls from colleagues in Ninewah and Kirkuk requesting his advice on how they should proceed. (Note: PRTPolOff promised to forward the Salah Ad Din-developed application forms to the PRTs in those Provinces. End Note.)

Suspicion of New De-Baath Law Remains

¶ 15. (C) There is an undercurrent of suspicion in the Province about the true motivation behind the Accountability and Justice Law and the lack of instructions from Baghdad.

Tikrit Law School Dean Amer Ayesh and Provincial Council (PC) Member Yousif Suleiman visited Baiji to brief former Baath Party members on their Baghdad meetings. The consensus of those in attendance was that the application process was a trap to get the names of former Baath Party members in order to continue their exclusion from public life. None thought that they would receive jobs or pensions. Jabara confirmed that this sentiment is shared by others in the Province, though he agreed with us that the biggest blunder would be to miss the application deadline.

Comment

¶ 16. (C) To accommodate its large population of former Baath Party members, Salah Ad Din has decided to work proactively to prepare for what could be a mad dash to get applications of former Baath Party members to Baghdad. In Salah Ad Din, the treatment of former Baathists is the key measure among many of whether the GoI is truly serious about reconciliation. The current lack of GoI progress on implementing the Accountability and Justice Law is viewed in this Province as a very negative signal. End Comment.

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